Johnson Orders Action, Stresses It Is Limited; U.N. to Hear Charges

By Murrey Marder
Staff Reporter

The Washington Post

Map shows areas where the United States destroyer Maddox was attacked Sunday (1) by North Vietnamese PT boats, and where the Maddox and the destroyer C. Turner Joy were attacked yesterday (2). President Johnson said last night he had ordered "air action" against "gunboats and certain facilities in North Viet-Nam," locations of which he did not identify.

President Johnson last night ordered United States "air action" against "gunboats and certain supporting facilities in North Viet-Nam" after the second attack in three days upon American warships by Communist torpedo boats.

In the gravest military confrontation since the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, the President said:

". . . Repeated acts of violence against the armed forces of the United States must be met not only with alert defense, but with positive reply. That reply is being given as I speak to you."

By that he meant, as was soon revealed here, that American fighter-bombers from aircraft carriers were already striking at the North Vietnamese PT-boat bases. The intent was to destroy the Communist torpedo boat capability.

In addition, the United States is sending substantial additional military elements to Southeast Asia.

But it was emphasized last night that the intent of the United States is not to escalate the war but only to retaliate against the Communist attacks.

The United States response to these two rounds of North Viet-Nam attacks on the "awesome" military power of the United States "will be limited and fitting," the President said solemnly.

"We still seek no wider war" in Southeast Asia, said the President, for Americans know, "although others appear to forget," the risks of spreading war.

The President said he has instructed Secretary of State Dean Rusk to make that position clear to "friends" and "adversaries" alike.

U.N. to Get Charges

He announced two other actions in a near-midnight address that climaxed a skyrocketing sequence of developments yesterday:

• Ambassador to the United Nations Adlai E. Stevenson has been instructed to raise "immediately and urgently" before the United Nations Security Council what the United States charges is a deliberate violation by North Viet-Nam of freedom of the seas, by attacks on U.S. vessels in international waters.

In New York last night, the United States officially asked for an urgent meeting of the Security Council this morning to inform the Council of its action. A meeting was set for 10:30 this morning.

• The President has already asked Senate and House leaders for action "immediate-

ly" on a congressional resolution expressing United States unity in a determination "to take all necessary measures in support of freedom, and in defense of peace, in Southeast Asia."

Resolution Assured

Mr. Johnson said congressional leaders assured him in a 90-minute meeting last night that such a resolution will be introduced, debated, and passed promptly with overwhelming support.
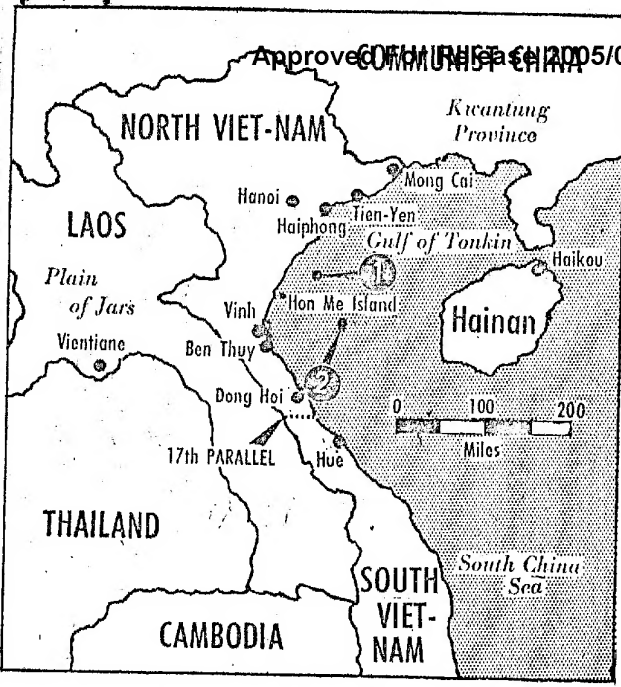
In his six-minute address last night, the President added to his prepared statement that he had discussed his decision by telephone with Republican presidential nominee Sen. Barry M. Goldwater. He said he reached the Senator in Balboa, Calif., and "I am glad to say he has expressed his support of the statement I am making tonight."

The President's swift decision yesterday to retaliate against the home bases of Communist attackers marks the first time that such an order has been given since the attacks on North Korean bases in the Korean War.

Action to be 'Limited'

However, President Johnson emphasized, in this case, that the "limited" nature of the